

# **Integrating Biodiversity in EIA in Quebec**

## **Lessons from experience**

by

**Pierre André, professeur**  
Département de géographie  
Université de Montréal

and

**Claude Delisle, retired professor**  
École Polytechnique de Montréal

Workshop on economy, society and biodiversity – From dependence to opportunities. *Strategies and tools for the management of biodiversity and ecosystem services. December 7, 2011.*

# Environmental Protection Regimes in Quebec



- Territoire soumis à la CBJNQ (nord du 55<sup>e</sup> parallèle)
- Territoire soumis à la CBJNQ (sud du 55<sup>e</sup> parallèle)
- Région de Moinier
- Territoire régi par le ch. I de la Loi sur la qualité de l'environnement

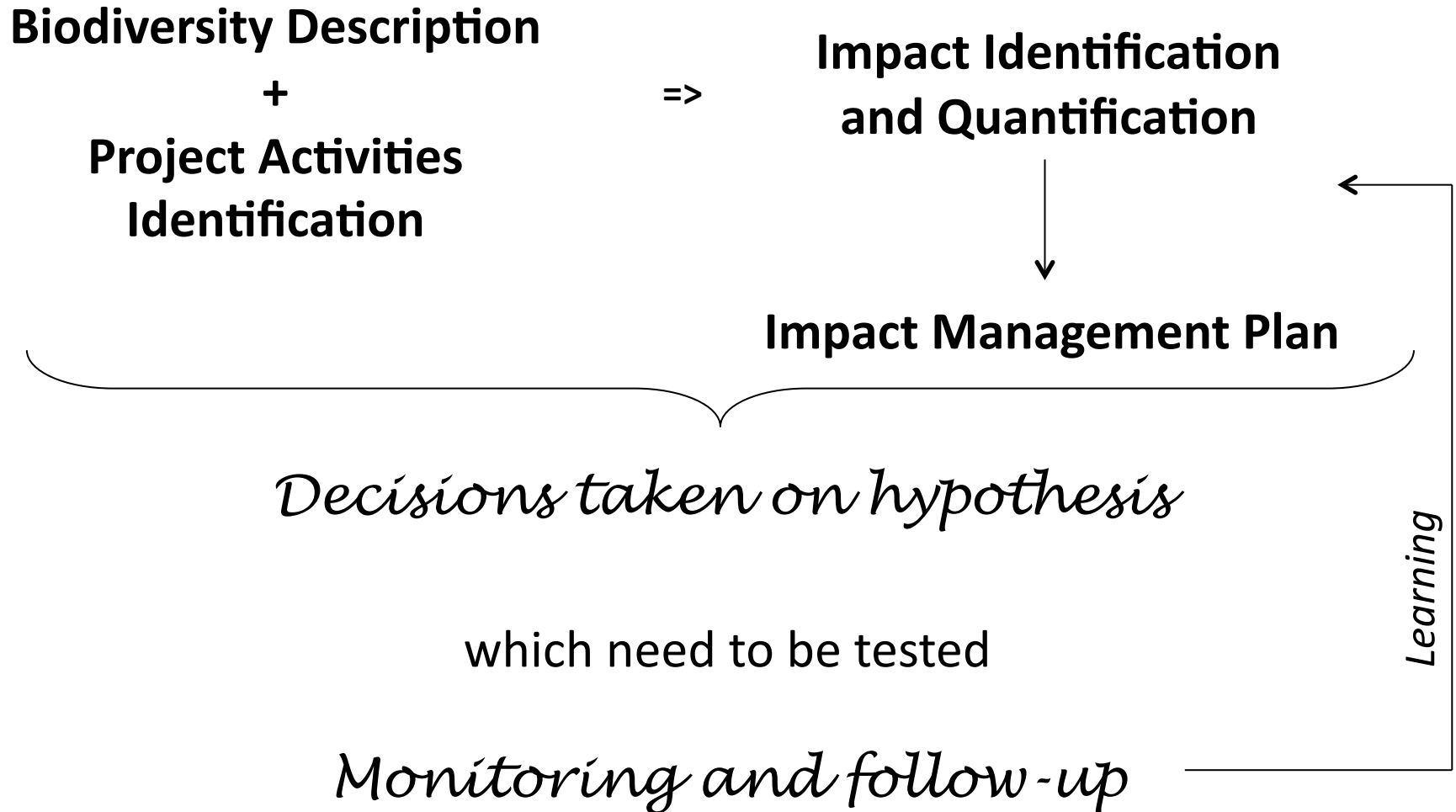
EIA – A scientific exercise within a socio-political context and a decision-taking process

Biodiversity, one of the issues

# Biodiversity Assessment Process within EIA Procedure



# EIA is a sum of hypothesis



# Biodiversity in EIA

- Description of ecosystems and habitats
- List of taxa (plants and animals)
- Population estimations and other informations
  - Spatial and seasonal variability
- Behavioural studies
- Emphasis
  - Rare, fragile or protected ecosystems
  - Species at risk

## Lessons from experience

- **Dispersion or loss of taxonomic information**
  - Lack of confidence on identifications
  - Loss of specimens and samplings for validation
  - Loss of data from surveys
  - *Need for a compulsory deposit of both specimens and data*
- Representativeness of the descriptions of populations, communities and ecosystems
- Ownership of knowledge

## Lessons from experience

- Dispersion or loss of taxonomic information
- **Representativeness of the descriptions of populations, communities and ecosystems**
  - Relevant emphasis on species and ecosystems at risk
  - Sub-optimal allocation of resources
  - Sampling strategies frequently criticized
  - *Need more guidelines and more control from the administration*
- Ownership of knowledge

## Lessons from experience

- Dispersion or loss of taxonomic information
- Representativeness of the descriptions of populations, communities and ecosystems
- **Ownership of knowledge**
  - Data and specimens collected owned by the project proponents
  - Monitoring and follow-up report are also owned by proponents and are confidential documents
  - *Need to require from developers to make public follow-up reports as well as data and specimens*



# Conclusion

- Biodiversity is a real issue recognized by the Quebec Sustainable Development Law and considered in EIA.
- We have developed a good expertise after more than 30 years of conducting EIA.
- We need to improve the practice of EIA to best meet the requirements of science
  - the specimens and data should be available for taxonomic expertise
  - inventories should be representative in time and space within the limits of the resources available, and
  - information should be best managed, public and accessible.

*We need to best manage knowledge to  
improve learning*